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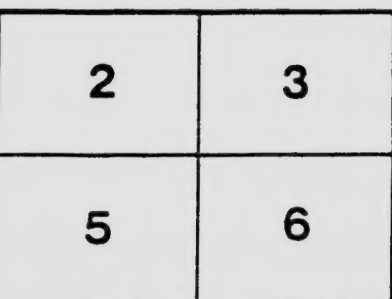
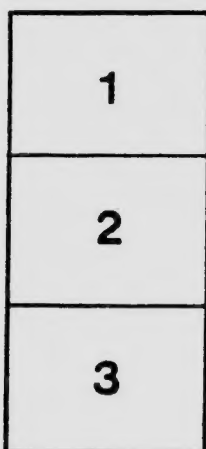
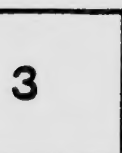
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HOME RELIGION—NUMBER 1.

# The Local Church and Home Religion

For Ministers, Sessions  
and other leaders  
in Religious  
Education



Prepared by the Board of Sabbath  
Schools and Young People's Societies  
of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Issued by the Committee of the  
Forward Movement. Copies free on  
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FOR MINISTERS, SESSIONS, AND OTHER  
P\*\*\* LEADERS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

EVERY congregation is made up of families. For the spiritual life of these families the Church is in large measure responsible. It should be the first consideration of every minister and his session to foster in each home the highest type of Christian living. No greater responsibility than this rests on the leaders of the local Church.

Few will be found to question the claim that the home has greater possibilities for the development of Christ-like character than any other institution. During the most impressionable period, the child is being moulded almost entirely by the influence of his home. The personality of the parents is continuously in close touch with the unfolding personalities of the children. The lives of the home ones are ever open, through faith and love, to the inspiring appeal of the parents' character. There are numerous opportunities during the day for the word or deed which serves to express the purpose of love and thus serves to develop the spirit of Christ in the life.

No effort should be spared to make the homes of our Church and nation in every way efficient as an agency in the religious education of our children. If the home

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fails, no other institution can wholly make up the lack. But we must do more than vaguely emphasize the need of home religion ; we must devise definite plans by which the religious life in the home may be fostered and we must make special effort to have these plans put into effective operation.

Some ways by which the cause of home religion may be furthered are here suggested, plans which have been tried and found to be of real value :

**I. FAMILY WORSHIP.**—There is nothing novel in this suggested plan. From the beginning it has been the custom in many homes to gather the family together to read the scripture and to offer prayer to the Heavenly Father. As a congregational effort, however, a suggestion is made by which the effort may be made more definite. Cards may be procured from Presbyterian Publications, Church and Gerrard Streets, Toronto, which have a place for the names of the parents who, by their signature, undertake to conduct family worship regularly in their homes. These cards are distributed among the people, preferably by the elders, after a sermon or series of sermons has been preached, dealing with the home as the primary agency in religious education. The whole matter of worship in the home is thus brought before the minds of the people in a tangible definite manner. Another pamphlet (No. 2) gives use-

ful information regarding helps, also suggestions regarding the time and method of conducting worship.

## **II. HOME READING CIRCLE.—**

The object of this plan is to fit parents for their great task of nurturing their children in the discipline and admonition of the Lord, by encouraging the reading of well selected, helpful books which deal with problems arising in the home. Cards are available at the office of the Board upon which will be found on one side a suggested prayer for use of parents and on the other a list of books suitable for parents who are daily facing difficulties in the family circle. The value of this plan will largely depend upon the judgment exercised in placing these books in the hands of parents whose particular needs will be most effectively met. The circulation of these books should be in the hands of a special committee of the Church School who are in touch with the children. A special leaflet is available, giving names of books suitable for home reading and graded to suit the needs of children of different ages.

## **III. A PARENTS' OR MOTHERS' CLASS.—**

Where possible in a congregation the parents, and more especially the mothers of the children, should be gathered together to consider the vital questions that arise in the home. Out of the practical experience of the mothers many helpful suggestions will naturally come which will give much light to those

younger mothers who are facing some particular difficulties for the first time. A course of study for such a class has been prepared by the International Sunday School Lesson Committee, entitled "An Introductory Course for Parent Training."

**IV. PARENTS—TEACHERS CONFERENCES.**—The best work cannot be done, either in the home or in the Church School, unless there is intelligent co-operation. The real progress in character development will largely depend upon the parents giving every possible assistance to the child in the preparation of his daily work in connection with his Sunday lesson and upon the teacher inspiring the pupil to live out in his home the religious truths learned from Sunday to Sunday. A practical method to secure this co-operation is to have the teachers in any one department of the school meet the parents of the children of that department, say once a quarter, and go over the lessons of the succeeding quarter, pointing out how the parents can help the children in their work. A pamphlet has been issued (No. 3) giving detailed instruction as to how this cooperation can best be secured.

**V. ATTENDANCE OF CHILDREN AT CHURCH WORSHIP.**—Every encouragement should be given to the practice of children attending the regular worship of the congregation. Unless the habit of Church attendance be acquired in

early life, it is not at all likely that it will be developed later. The object should be that the child should begin early to attend at least a portion of the regular worship, and that this habit should not be broken until it be fully established in the life. Various methods are in operation, each in the past having proved successful : (1) There is the system by which each child is given a Church Attendance Card, which is punched at the door of the church whenever the child attends worship. Suitable rewards are given to those who attend a certain percentage of Sundays during the year. Supplies for this plan may be procured from Presbyterian Publications.

(2) A number of Churches have "Junior Congregations." The children remain in the regular Church service until just before the sermon, and during the singing of a hymn they file out to the school room and continue their worship by themselves. The main feature of their service is a Bible story, suited to the capacity of the children. (3) In some congregations the children of the Beginners and Primary Departments come with their parents to the morning worship and sit with them in their regular pews. The minister, after the reading of scripture, tells a short story sermon for the little folks, then offers for them a short prayer. A children's hymn is then sung, during the last stanza of which the children proceed to the school room, where they have their



regular study. They are dismissed at the same time as the adult congregation, so that they may go home with their parents. When they are graduated from the Primary Department at nine years of age they are expected to remain through the regular worship of the congregation.

**VI. SERIES OF SERMONS.**—There is ample evidence that the pulpit as a rule has not kept before the minds of the people the fundamental place of the home as an agency for the religious nurture of children. Those who have taken pains to present this matter to their congregations have found that their effort has been much appreciated. No labor will be more fruitful than that which gives guidance and inspiration to the home, so that the parents may discharge more effectively their great responsibility in this regard.

*(See final pages for suggested topics.)*

**VII. PREPARATION FOR COMMUNION.**—Definite plans should be made to give adequate information to the teen age boys and girls, both in the home and Church, regarding the meaning of the Christian Life, and of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, so that every boy and girl may intelligently take a stand for Christ and become a member of the Church in full communion. This important step in the life of youth should not be left to take care of itself. It should be an integral part of the work of the Church School to inspire and guide each life at this critical juncture. A number of ad-



dressess should be given each year to the teen age pupils of the school during the school session, so that every young person in the Church would be brought face to face with their privilege and responsibility in this regard, "That none may be lost." The Senior Graded Lessons, Oct.-Dec., 1919, have been specially prepared with this end in view.

**VIII. CRADLE ROLL AND CHILD BAPTISM.**—The place of the little child in relation to the Church must be clearly recognized. The Cradle Roll Department may be made of great value in connection with the congregation in linking up the homes of these little ones with the Church, and providing a channel through which helpful influences may be brought to bear upon the home. Emphasis should be laid upon the baptism of each child. This sacrament should be administered at one of the regular Church services. The congregation should stand during the ordinance and thus formally assume the responsibility for the religious nurture of the lambs of the flock.

These are some suggestions which may be of assistance to those who have the conviction that the flow of real religious life in the Church and the nation rises and falls with the state of religion in the homes of our people. No work touches so directly the roots of our national life as that which gives real help to the homes from which proceed what is best, as well as what is worst, in the lives of the people.

## **SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR USE IN PRE- PARATION OF ADDRESSES ON THE HOME**

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### **(1) Fundamental Nature of the Home :**

A God-ordained institution universal throughout the human race.

The modern home the product of a long process of development.

Lengthened period of infancy in the human species calls for continued care by parents.

Childhood the strategic period for the shaping of character.

Teen-age and life decision.

Importance of atmosphere.

Heredity determines physical characteristics, environment or racial heredity (influences subsequent to birth) determines higher moral and spiritual qualities.

Evil home influence stifles religious development of children.

### **(2) The Home and Education :**

All education really one—the realizing of every latent possibility in the child.

Prime responsibility for education of children rests with the parents.

A religious duty to God and man that the child develop to the utmost his mental power.

Mere cleverness not enough. The clever but immoral politician or business man a menace to the nation's life. Necessity of educating higher spiritual and religious nature.

Home Reading. Importance of good literature placed at the disposal of the children.

Unconscious influence of parents in their daily life.

Family Worship and specific instruction in the Bible.

The home the natural sphere for living out in word and deed the truths of religion.

### **(3) The Home and the Church :**

Co-operation of parents with minister and teachers.

Assistance given by parents to children in preparation of home work.

Secure attendance of children at Church worship.

Teachers keep in touch with homes of their children.

Home Department and Cradle Roll.

Responsibility of parents for success of Sunday School.

Child Baptism. Child brought up as a Christian, taught to follow Jesus from infancy.

### **(4) The Home and National Life :**

The home not an end in itself.

Purpose of home—to rear men and women of Christian character.

National life rises no higher than its source in the homes of the people.

Home the most potent factor in shaping character of the citizens.

Great life decisions influenced by the home.

Recruits for the ministry.

Qualities which make good citizens, developed in the home—loyalty, obedience, service, sacrifice, mutual consideration.

(5) **Home Life in the Bible :**

Family life of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Eli, David, Solomon, etc.

Homes at Cana, Bethany, etc.

Mothers' influence—Hannah, Rizpah, Salome, Eunice, etc.

Jesus sat at meat with publicans and entered homes of Pharisees.

Children a blessing.

Truths of Kingdom of God set forth in terms of family relationships : Matt. 5 : 31, 32 ; 7 : 9-11 ; 10 : 36, 37. Luke 2 : 49, 52 ; 14 : 26 ; 12 : 48, 49 ; 15 : 3-6 ; 18 : 2, 3 ; 19 : 4-9 ; 19 : 1-4 ; 21 : 16 ; 21 : 28 ; 21 : 33 ; 22 : 30.

(6) **Influences Playing upon the Modern Home:**

(a) *Individualism* which has asserted itself in political life, the church, and the social and industrial world—a demand for freedom.

(b) *Irreligion*. Indifference to inherited forms of religion, faith and practice, absence of family worship, desecration of the Sabbath.

(c) *Rush for pleasure*, commercialized amusements, lack of serious life-purpose. Pleasure sought outside the home carries mind away from home duties.

(d) *Hesitancy to assume marital and parental responsibility*, not willing to begin home making in a humble way.  
(Large number unmarried.)  
(Marriages late in life, race suicide.)

(e) *Economic Conditions*—Low wages of father forces mother and children to work, this entails poverty and ignorance. Parental control weakens when children earn their own living.  
In wealthy families home often deserted.

(f) *Instability of Family Life*, divorce, boarding-house life, unsteady employment, sailors, railway men, etc.  
Young people away from home.

**(7) Remedies to be sought through :**

*State—*

More stringent laws regarding marriage and divorce.

Not to go too far in relieving parental responsibility.

Insist on adequate provision for children's welfare and on moral influence.

Mothers' pensions.

*School—*

Train older boys and girls in essentials of home-making.

*Church—*

Foster family worship and home religion.

Give baptism its proper place of importance.

Exalt motherhood as woman's noblest sphere.

No work so important and far-reaching.

*Individual—*

Home making taken more seriously.

Look for character in partner rather than accomplishments, social position or wealth.

Provide wholesome amusement in home.

Be the companion of your children.

Found home on Love.

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Any further information regarding any of the above plans will be gladly given by the office of the Board of Sabbath Schools and Young People's Societies, 411 Confederation Life Building, Toronto.



